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AUTHOR Knox, Alan B.  
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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzed aspects of assistant professor promotion and tenure packets that contained varying emphases on outreach associated with a positive promotion recommendation. Fictionalized versions of actual promotion packets for 18 men and women were obtained from seven midwest universities. Packets varied by type of department and by extent and type of outreach responsibilities reported by the assistant professors. Forty-three experienced reviewers evaluated packets, rating 20 aspects and listing the aspects most influential in their recommendation. Data analysis included inductive classification of written comments, and cluster analysis of the ratings of the 20 aspects and the recommendations. The study found that the aspects most generally associated with promotion were outreach research and external funding. The aspects most associated with assessing outreach performance were outreach research, outreach teaching, outreach service, letter of appointment, and impact on the field. Classification of open-ended comments regarding the promotion recommendation found the following most related: quality, research, and outreach impact. Implications for strengthening the process of outreach promotion are identified. The form for assessing the promotion packet is attached. (Contains 31 references.) (DB)

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## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENT OUTREACH PERFORMANCE

Alan B. Knox  
Continuing Education  
1282H Educational Sciences  
University of Wisconsin  
1025 W. Johnson St.  
Madison, WI 53706  
Phone (608) 263-2937  
FAX (608) 265-3135  
e-mail KNOX@soemadison.wisc.edu

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## Overview 11/98

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENT OUTREACH PERFORMANCE

Alan B. Knox, University of Wisconsin  
1282H Edu. Sci., 1025 W. Johnson St., Madison, WI 53706

The study purpose was to analyze aspects of assistant professor promotion and tenure packets that contained varying emphasis on outreach, which were associated with a positive promotion recommendation. This topic is important because outreach teaching and research is increasingly central to the university mission and excellent outreach programs reflect the quality of faculty outreach performance.

Fictionalized versions of actual promotion packets for 18 men and women were obtained from 7 midwest Land Grant universities. They varied in type of department and the extent and type of outreach responsibilities that these assistant professors reported. The promotion packets included: appointment letter and position description, transmittal letter from the department, vita, sample publications, assessment of teaching performance, and external review letters. Faculty members and administrators with experience reviewing promotion materials read packets and completed an assessment form which covered 20 aspects (12 sections of the packet and 8 overall impressions). They rated each aspect regarding importance to promotion generally and evidence of quality in that packet. They also made a promotion recommendation (deny, marginal, recommend, strongly recommend) then listed which of the aspects were most influential on their recommendation and provided comments on their rationale. Data analysis included inductive classification of written comments, and cluster analysis of the ratings of the 20 aspects and the recommendation.

The cluster analysis yielded three clusters, the first of which contained two sub groups. The resulting four sets of aspects were:

- \* Creatively responsive (7 aspects and the promotion recommendation)
- \* Impact on the field (6 aspects)
- \* Balance of research with teaching and service (18 aspects)
- \* Role expectations, especially regarding teaching (7 aspects)

Using the average level of promotion recommendation (based on ratings from 2 to 6 reviewers) the distribution was 3 strong recommendations, 13 recommendations, and 2 marginal recommendations. From a cross tabulation of the recommendation and aspects reported as influential, 6 aspects were associated with the recommendation regardless of outreach responsibility. They were: external review letters, resident teaching, transmittal letter, sample publications, and vita. The aspects that were most associated for promotion generally were: outreach research and external funding. The aspects that were most associated for assessing outreach performance were: outreach research, outreach teaching, outreach service, letter of appointment, and impact on the field. When the 20 aspects were compared with average level of recommendation (deny, recommend, strong), 3 aspects were especially associated when the emphasis was on outreach. They were external review letters, outreach research, and sample publications. Other aspects related to promotion generally

included: discipline research, resident teaching, transmittal letter, outreach teaching, and appointment letter.

From the classification of open-ended comments regarding assessment decisions, those especially related to the promotion recommendation were: quality, research and outreach impact. Other comments pertained to: expectations, the organization of the promotion packet, and teaching.

Although there were many similarities across reviewers and institutions, there were some contrasting viewpoints which reflected reviewers' experience and values. Such differing viewpoints emerged especially regarding:

- \* appointment/position description
- \* transmittal of packet from department
- \* external review

Some reviewers emphasized an aspect as essential and other reviewers ignored it. These differing viewpoints suggest that one use of general guidelines is to focus attention on assessing actual expectations and past decisions in the specific situation.

Increasing attention to assessing and recognizing the quality of faculty outreach performance reflects a growing interest in multiple faculty roles regarding knowledge discovery, integration, dissemination and application.

Implications for strengthening the process of outreach promotion include:

- \* Be responsive to reviewers' expectations.
- \* Use guidelines to help candidates, mentors, reviewers and administrators.
- \* As the promotion packet evolves, emphasize descriptive and evaluative information about aspects relevant to the promotion decision (such as: creatively responsive, impact on field, balance of research and other responsibilities, and expectations related to teaching.)
- \* Make the promotion packet brief, complete and clear.
- \* Outreach forms of teaching, research and service are increasingly accepted for promotion.
- \* High quality performance and accomplishment is more important than the proportion of outreach.
- \* Contrasting reviewer viewpoints suggest treating guidelines as tentative pending assessment of actual current expectations and past decisions.
- \* Consider likely institutional expectations about the importance of various aspects, as well as evidence of performance.
- \* Universities can revise guidelines but reviewers' views may not match guidelines.
- \* Use writings about outreach promotion as background for guidance for candidates.

### Purpose

Judging the quality of faculty outreach performance has become increasingly important as extension, continuing education and other forms of outreach have become more widespread and central to the university mission. The century-long trend of increasing centrality of outreach in United States higher education institutions is reflected in various changes in policies and practices. One is that part-time and returning adult students have become the new majority in higher education credit and degree programs (outnumbering young full-time students entering directly from secondary school). A second policy change is the increasing number of university mission statements that include dissemination and application of knowledge along with discovery and synthesis as forms of scholarship.

The excellence of a broad range of outreach forms of teaching, research and service reflects the quality of performance by faculty members who help to plan and conduct such activities. Full-time faculty members and adjunct instructors (who teach on a part-time or short-term basis) vary in their extent and types of contributions to outreach. Especially in Land Grant universities with almost a century of experience with extension and other outreach activities, some faculty and staff members are uninvolved and for some faculty and staff members their outreach contributions are a small proportion of their total responsibilities, but some faculty and staff members carry substantial outreach responsibilities.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the types of information in packets used to make promotion and tenure decisions for assistant professors with substantial outreach responsibilities. The object was to identify variables associated with positive promotion decisions. Such associations might be widespread or specific to institutions and scholarly fields. The study findings might have implications for institutional policies, career priorities, and interpersonal relations which could guide decisions by such assistant professors, by review committees at department, college and institutional levels, and by outreach administrators.

### Method

The study methods and procedures were designed to approximate the process when promotion and tenure materials for faculty members with substantial outreach responsibilities are evaluated and promotion recommendations are made. The process began by contacting people known to care about outreach promotion at Midwest Land Grant universities. A written project overview was then sent to them and to people whom they had identified at their university who were in departments, colleges and campus-level positions that would allow them to suggest actual recent promotion packets that included outreach performance.

As a result, dozens of faculty members who went through the promotion review process agreed to send a copy of their promotion materials for use in this study. These men and women were from one of seven universities, had appointments in more than a dozen departments, and varied greatly in the extent of

their outreach responsibilities (ranging from less than 15 percent to full-time budgeted extension appointments). In addition to departments in colleges with a tradition of extension appointments (such as agriculture and home economics) packets were also obtained from departments in university professional schools and liberal arts colleges. Eighteen packets were fictionalized to retain the authentic character of the materials, but to obscure the name of the faculty member and of the institution, as was agreed upon from the outset. The fictionalized versions were sent to the faculty members, and each agreed that the final version was authentic and sufficiently fictionalized. (Most of them didn't care whether the original or fictionalized version was used for the study, but use of a fictionalized version allowed reviewers to rate the packet as they might if it was from their own university).

When fictionalizing each of the packets, a somewhat distinctive set of promotion materials was available, depending on practices in the institution and field. However, for ease of review, the format was somewhat standardized and some redundancy was reduced. Actual illustrative publications were included, but without explicit identification of the author (assistant professor). Because of assurances of confidentiality when external review letters were obtained, fictional versions were prepared with similar contents and recommendations, but with no reviewer identified. Typical contents of a promotion packet included: appointment letter or position description, a transmittal letter from the department chair with the departmental recommendation and vote, the faculty member's vita, sample

publications, report on externally funded projects, descriptions and evaluations of performance in institutional and outreach forms of teaching and research and service, and external review letters.

People at each of the Land Grant universities who helped to identify potential promotion packets also suggested potential reviewers. Such people with experience reviewing the promotion materials of assistant professors and making recommendations were contacted and were provided a listing of the promotion packets, including the assistant professor's departmental field. Those who agreed were sent one or more packets, and an assessment form (questionnaire) to complete after reading the packet. Forty-three reviewers returned a total of sixty-two completed assessment forms.

The assessment form was in three parts. Part A was a listing of twelve aspects of the promotion packet (such as the transmittal letter from the department chair, ratings of teaching, sample publications, external review letters). Part B was a listing of eight overall impressions based on information from various aspects of the promotion packet (such as creativity, methodological rigor, and contribution to the field related to outreach). For each of these twenty statements in Parts A and B, the reviewer was asked to check on a five point scale how important such information is for a promotion decision and the extent of quality as reflected in the information provided in the packet, and to provide explanatory comments. Part C contained the reviewer's recommendation regarding promotion, identification of aspects of the packet that most influenced the recommendation, missing



information that should have been included, aspects most related to judging outreach; and other comments. Reviewers were assured of confidentiality of their reviews.

Analysis of the assessment forms included the following procedures. Each completed assessment form was read for content and clarity, and where indicated the promotion packet to which it referred was consulted. The open-ended items in Part C were read and the following inductive classification was prepared and used to code the written comments in each assessment form.

- \* Quality and productivity
- \* Expectations for role
- \* Vita and documentation
- \* Research and publications
- \* Teaching
- \* Outreach
- \* External review
- \* Funding
- \* Own assessment
- \* None

Cluster analysis was used to analyze the forty importance and quality ratings in parts A and B using a 5-point scale, and a 4-point scale for the promotion recommendation (deny, marginal support, recommend promotion,

strong recommendation). The results of this analysis were analyzed for individual promotion packets, for all eighteen, and for sub sets based on departmental field of the assistant professor and university of reviewer (where numbers of packets and reviewers per institution allowed). After relationships between the promotion recommendation and other variables were identified, illustrative examples from individual packets and assessment forms were selected.

### Findings

Before reporting the findings related to the clusters of ratings that emerged, this section includes brief comments on: the promotion recommendation, the ratings on the importance of variables, and discrepancies between importance and quality ratings and the recommendation.

The criterion variable in this study was the promotion recommendation.

There were four levels of rating:

1. deny promotion
2. marginal support
3. recommend promotion
4. strong recommendation

The number of reviewers who made recommendations for each of the promotion packets ranged from 2 to 6, with a mean rating of 3.2 for all 18 packets. The range of average ratings was from a high of 3.8 to a low of 2.0. The distribution of frequencies by quarters is listed in Table 1:

Table 1

**Distribution of Promotion Recommendation Ratings**

<b><u>Ave. Rating</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency</u></b>
<b><u>top quarter</u></b>	
3.8	1
3.7	1
3.5	2
<b><u>middle two quarters</u></b>	
3.3	6
3.0	3
<b><u>bottom quarter</u></b>	
2.8	3
2.5	1
2.0	1

The ratings of the importance of a variable for promotion decisions generally were compared with the ratings for each variable regarding quality based on the information in the specific promotion packet. For most variables, the two average ratings were similar, with six or fewer of the packets in which the quality ratings were somewhat lower than the importance ratings. For three variables, there were more packets with discrepancies between average importance ratings

and the somewhat lower average quality ratings. They were institutional service (10 packets), outreach service (7 packets), and honors and recognition (7 packets).

The average quality ratings of the total set of packets varied greatly. One way of indicating this variation was the percentage of ratings for each variable that was at the highest (5) level. Table 2 lists the 20 variables in descending order, including the percent with a 5 rating for the general importance of the variable, the percent with a 5 rating for quality, and the difference between the two ratings for that variable.

Most of the ratings of the importance of each variable generally were somewhat higher than the ratings of the quality of the information related to that variable in a specific packet. The greatest discrepancies were for variables 6 (expectations) and 4 (chair's letter). For three of the lowest ranked variables regarding importance, the rating of quality was not lower than the rating of importance (20, institutional service; 17, external funding; and 19, honors and recognition). The four highest ranked variables regarding importance reflected performance and results. The nine high middle variables emphasized outreach along with expectations and performance that reflected a balance of teaching, research and service. The two lowest ranked variables (19, honors; 20, institutional service) were viewed by many reviewers as not to be expected for assistant professors.

Table 2  
Average Ratings of the  
Importance of Variables

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Percent of Raters Assigning a 5 Rating</u>		
	Importance	Quality	Difference
<b>High</b>			
1. Impact and contribution to field	67	43	24
2. Responsive to outreach expectations	64	57	7
3. External review letters	64	43	21
4. Letter from department chair	62	32	30
<b>High middle</b>			
5. Balance, teaching, research, service	54	46	8
6. Expectations, appointment, position	54	13	41
7. Importance of topics	52	49	3
8. Discipline research, publications	52	38	14
9. Originality, creativity, innovation	52	33	19
10. Outreach research	52	29	23
11. Sample publications	51	35	16
12. Outreach teaching	49	25	24
13. Outreach service	44	38	6
14. Vita, career information	43	29	14
<b>Low middle</b>			
15. Methodological rigor	35	27	8
16. Resident teaching	33	19	14
17. External funding, projects	30	35	(5)
18. Career enhancement	29	21	8
<b>Low</b>			
19. Honors and recognition	19	19	0
20. Institutional service	6	19	(13)

The central purpose of the study was to explore relationships between the variables (importance, quality) and the recommendation regarding promotion. The main way of doing so was cluster analysis. The quality ratings were emphasized when interpreting the clusters, but the importance ratings were also considered. Three major clusters emerged, with two sub-groups within each cluster (one of which was a single variable). The major cluster that included the promotion recommendation consisted of 14 variables. The sub-group of 8 variables within that cluster that included the recommendation reflected performance that was creatively responsive (based on the quality variables). The other sub-group of 6 variables within that cluster reflected impact on the field. The second major cluster was of 20 variables, with sub-groups of 18 and 2 variables (the latter of which was composed of importance ratings for letter from department chair and outreach teaching). The cluster of 18 variables reflected career balance of research as well as teaching and service. The third cluster of 7 variables reflected role expectations, especially related to teaching. In addition to the cluster analysis for all ratings of all promotion packets, cluster analysis was performed for sub categories related to disciplinary fields of the assistant professors and to institutions of the reviewers. The following presentation of findings from the cluster analysis is based on the

total data set, but differences related to sub-categories are also noted. The variables grouped in each cluster and sub-group are listed in Table 3.

Table 3  
Variables Included in Four Clusters

<u>CLUSTER</u>	<u>QUALITY</u>	<u>IMPORTANCE</u>
RESPONSIVE	Responsive to outreach Originality (included recommendation)	Originality Publication External letters Honors Institutional service
IMPACT	Impact on field Topic importance External review letters	Impact on field Topic importance Responsive to outreach
CAREER BALANCE	Vita, career information, Career enhancement Disciplinary research Outreach research Outreach service Disciplinary rigor Balance (teaching, research, service) Publications Honors Institutional service	Vita, career information Career enhancement Disciplinary research Outreach research Outreach service Disciplinary rigor Balance (teaching, research, service) Funding of projects

EXPECTATIONS	Expectations, appointment	Expectations, appointment
TEACHING	Resident teaching	Resident teaching
	Outreach teaching	
	Letter, chair	
	Funding of projects	

The creatively responsive subgroup of the first cluster included the recommendation regarding promotion for the total of all reviewers and all promotion packets, and also in most of the sub populations (and the recommendation was in an adjoining sub-group of the cluster for the remaining two). Three sub populations for which cluster analysis was conducted were based on the disciplinary fields of the assistant professors (7 from agriculture, 6 from home economics and 5 from professional schools and liberal arts). Although each of these sub populations had a similar creatively responsive cluster of quality ratings, there were some differences. For example, for agriculture faculty, this cluster included responsiveness to outreach but not creativity, and also included were outreach and institutional service, external funding, honors, outreach research, and topic importance. For home economics faculty, this cluster included creativity but not responsiveness, and also included topic importance and external review letters. For the faculty members from professional schools and liberal arts, the recommendation for promotion was not included in this cluster, but creativity, disciplinary research, and outreach service were. The pattern of variables in this and other clusters for faculty members from agriculture and home economics probably reflects the tradition of budgeted extension appointments in these fields.



Unlike reviewers from liberal arts and professional schools, many of whom seldom reviewed packets for faculty members with cooperative extension appointments, reviewers with such experience usually understood such outreach appointments. For the former, it is especially important that appointments and roles are clear, and that experience with outreach research indicates ability to supervise doctoral dissertations.

Cluster analysis was also conducted for the sub populations based on the university in which reviewers were located, where there were 5 or more reviewers. There was less similarity across these sub populations than for disciplinary fields of the assistant professors. For example, quality ratings for responsiveness and creativity occurred in this cluster, but not the ratings of importance for these variables. This cluster for one institution included vita and honors, while another included external review letters and outreach service, and a third included outreach research. This pattern of institutional clusters probably reflects different institutional traditions regarding promotion and tenure criteria along with variation among disciplinary fields.

The closely related sub group of variables within the first major cluster was labeled impact on the field. Three quality ratings constituted this cluster for the total set of all assistant professors and all reviewers. The aspects on the importance of the topics emphasized in outreach and other activities and the indications of impact on the field related to this specialty for both quality of performance and the importance of the variables were highly rated by the reviewers. The third quality rating in this cluster was external review letters which

many reviewers emphasized as major indicators of impact and prominence in the field beyond the institution. The importance rating of responsiveness to outreach (for which the quality rating was included in the other subgroup in this major cluster) was also included in this impact cluster.

The clusters for the sub-populations were very similar. The quality ratings for agriculture faculty were impact on field and external letters, for home economics were impact and responsiveness, and for other faculty was topic importance. For one of the institutions, the promotion recommendation was in this cluster, along with impact, topic importance, external letters, and discipline-oriented research. For the other institutions with five or more reviewers, the variables usually included in this impact cluster were topic importance, external letters, responsiveness to outreach, and creativity.

The second major cluster included half of the variables, so was quite varied, but the main theme was career balance regarding research as well as teaching and service, as reflected especially in the vita and publications. The promotion recommendation was not part of this cluster, with the exception of the sub population of assistant professors from professional schools and liberal arts. Other variables in this cluster with both quality and importance ratings included career enhancement, disciplinary research, methodological rigor, outreach research, and outreach service. The teaching related variables did not occur in this cluster. The pattern of variables was similar for each of the sub populations based on disciplinary field and institutions of reviewers.

The remaining cluster was similar for the sub populations as it was for the total. The focus was expectations, especially related to teaching. Quality and importance variables in this cluster included expectations from the position description, the letter of appointment, resident teaching and outreach teaching. The quality rating for external funding for projects was also included.

In summary, four clusters or sub groups emerged. The promotion recommendation was associated with the creatively responsive sub group of the first cluster and the other sub group was impact on the field. Half of the variables were associated with the career balance cluster which emphasized research and service. The remaining cluster was expectations, especially related to teaching.

The number of reviewers who made promotion recommendations for each assistant professor ranged from four packets for which there were two reviewers to one packet for which there were six. The categories of recommendation were: deny, marginal support, recommend, and strongly recommend. Fourteen of the 18 packets received similar recommendations, either identical or adjoining ratings regarding strength of support for promotion and tenure.

Table 4 presents the numbers of packets rated, raters, and ratings in each of the four categories.

Table 4

<u>Institution of Rater</u>	<u>Packets Rated</u>	<u>Number of Raters</u>	<u>Deny</u>	<u>Marginal</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Strong</u>
A	13	13	1	1	7	4
B	12	10	-	-	10	2
C	11	7	2	-	8	1
D	11	5	-	3	2	6
E	7	3	-	-	5	2
F	6	4	1	1	2	2
G	2	1	-	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>

Most of the ratings were in the recommend promotion category except one institution where a majority of the ratings were in the strong recommendation category. Raters from two of the institutions used all four categories, and raters from two institutions used three categories. The sole rater from one institution rated both packets in the strongly recommend category, and each of the ratings from raters at other two institutions were in the recommend or strongly recommend category. In general, the ratings were fairly consistent, but there were some variations by institution of rater.

To better understand the reviewers' rationales for promotion recommendations, they were asked which of the 20 aspects of the candidates' packet most influenced their recommendation and why. They had rated the aspects for importance and quality just before making their recommendation.

In addition to asking about their rationale for influences on their recommendation generally, they were asked which aspects listed were most important to them in judging the performance of a faculty member with outreach responsibilities. There were, of course, many similarities. This section reports the aspects that were influential both generally and in relation to outreach performance, followed by the aspects that were mentioned more frequently as a general influence than in relation to outreach performance. The subsequent part reports aspects mentioned more frequently regarding outreach than generally. The section concludes with Table 8 which compares frequently mentioned aspects with level of recommendation.

Table 5 lists the aspects mentioned frequently both generally and regarding outreach performance.

Table 5

Influential Aspects

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Frequency of Mention</u>	
	General	Outreach
* External Review Letters	30	27
* Resident Teaching/Peer Review/ Student Ratings	22	19
* Transmittal Letter from Department Chair	21	16
* Sample Publications	19	20
* Vita/Background Information on Education, Career	16	16

These aspects of a promotion packet and the performance as an assistant professor that it should reflect, might be considered as essential for promotion of assistant professors in Land Grant and similar universities, regardless of extent of outreach responsibilities. The vita, transmittal letter, and sample publications cover a department's basic case for promotion, with external review letters assessing scholarly productivity and promise, and evaluation by students and peers addressing quality of teaching. All of these can contain evidence of impact on the

field, which was mentioned more frequently regarding outreach performance than for general performance.

Table 6 lists two aspects that received more mentions regarding performance generally than for outreach performance.

Table 6  
Aspects That Were More Influential  
Generally Than for Outreach

Aspect	Frequency of Mention	
	General	Outreach
* Outreach research, Evidence of Contribution	27	19
* External Funding	10	5

These two aspects are connected because of the high priority for faculty research at Land Grant universities and emphasis on external funding that serves many purposes.

Table 7 lists five aspects that received more mentions regarding influence on outreach performance recommendations than for performance generally.

Table 7  
Aspects That Were More Influential Regarding  
Outreach Than For Performance Generally

Frequency of Mention

Aspect	General	Outreach
* Outreach research evidence of contribution	25	40
* Outreach teaching participant ratings	27	36
* Outreach service	14	23
* Expectations/appointment letter/position description	7	20
* Impact and contribution to the field	12	17

Understandably, outreach research, teaching, and service were among the most frequently mentioned aspects, especially regarding evaluation of outreach performance. Evidence of impact of faculty performance on the field was deemed influential on promotion recommendations, as were expectations reflected in appointment letters and position descriptions. (For some packets, there was no appointment letter or position description, and expectations were very general.)



As a way of exploring the likely influence of aspects on the recommendation, frequency of mention of the 20 aspects of packets was compared with levels of recommendation (deny, marginal, recommend, strong). The average rating for three packets was approximately strongly recommend. The average rating for two packets was between deny and marginal recommendation. The average ratings for the remaining 13 packets were grouped around recommend promotion. Table 8 presents the frequency distributions for eight aspects that were highly associated with level of recommendation, which reveal differences between influences on general recommendation and on outreach performance. The distribution for most of the remaining aspects were similar to each other.

Table 8  
Relationships Among Aspects Most Frequently Mentioned  
As Influencing Recommendation, and Level of Recommendation

Aspect	General				Outreach			
	Hi	Md	Lo	Total	Hi	Md	Lo	Total
*External review	8	18	4	30	6	18	3	27
*Outreach research	3	21	1	25	7	29	4	40
*Publication	3	12	4	19	6	13	1	20
*Discipline research	3	20	4	27	3	14	2	19
*Resident teaching	3	15	4	22	4	12	3	19
*Transmittal letter	6	12	3	21	3	10	3	16
*Outreach teaching	3	21	2	27	4	28	4	36
*Expectation/appointment	2	5	-	7	3	15	2	20

*Expectation/appointment	2	5	-	7	3	15	2	20
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Table 8 lists aspects that were identified previously as most frequently mentioned as influential on promotion decisions, regardless of the extent of an assistant professor's emphasis on outreach. Included were outreach teaching and research, external review letters, publications, expectations regarding appointment, disciplinary research, and resident teaching. Aspects most frequently mentioned regarding performance generally included external review (30), disciplinary research (27), and outreach research (25). Aspects mentioned most frequently regarding outreach performance especially included outreach research (40), and teaching (36), and external review (27). Within each of these ratings of general and outreach performance, the high, middle and low columns of the table refer to the average level of the promotion recommendation (strong, recommend, marginal). The aspects that were especially associated with the level of recommendation regarding performance generally were the department chair's transmittal letter (6) and the external review letters (8). The aspects that were especially associated with the level of recommendation regarding outreach performance were outreach research (7), publications (6), and external review letters (6).

**Table 9**  
**Rationale for Assessment of Packet**  
**(Frequency of Mention)**

Content of comments	Q 21b reason for promotion recommen dation	Q22b why selected influences of aspects	Q23 missing information	Q24b why aspects for outreach	Q25 other comments
1. Quality, balance, productive, leader	33	17	16	10	11
2. Expectations, appointment, dept.	19	16	16	14	13
3. Packet, details, organization	11	12	13	13	18
4. Research, importance, publications	25	17	17	7	5
5. Teaching, reactions, observation	17	16	15	11	3
6. Outreach impact, evaluation, responsive	28	18	18	29	14
7. External, letters, recognition	13	18	17	17	4
8. Funding	5	3	2	2	1
9. Own assessment, future directions	1	3	3	3	6

In addition to reviewers' mention of some of the 20 aspects of the packets that were listed in the review form, they commented in response to five open-ended questions (and in comments throughout) on their rationale for why they

made the assessment decisions that they did. Table 9 lists the content of their comments based on an inductive classification that resulted in nine categories of content used to code their responses to the five open-ended questions regarding: their reasons for their promotion recommendation, why they selected the aspects that influenced their recommendation, the types of information that was missing from the packet which would have contributed to their decision, the aspects that were especially relevant to assessment of outreach performance, and other comments.

The most frequently written comments regarding reviewers' reasons for their promotion recommendation pertained to:

- \* Balanced and high quality productivity
- \* Evidence of outreach impact
- \* Important research and publications

In reviewers' comments about why they selected some aspects of promotion packets as especially important for recommendations related to outreach performance, evaluative evidence of outreach impact was prominent. Such evidence of outreach impact has often been suggested over the years. In response to this suggestion it has been noted that convincing evidence of impact is difficult to obtain because of multiple influences, and that comparable evidence of impact of resident instruction and disciplinary research is seldom provided.

The comments about why reviewers selected the aspects they did as influential on the promotion recommendation generally were quite evenly

distributed across two-thirds of the categories of rationale (16-18 mentions). This was also so for comments on missing information.

### Institutional and Departmental Variations

The foregoing sections of this report have emphasized influences on promotion recommendations at upper midwest Land Grant universities. This section focuses on variations among universities and departments. Some striking contrasts emerged for three aspects -- appointment letters and position descriptions, transmittal letters for the promotion packet, and external review letters. The following example illustrates such contrasts.

Dr. Stier was an assistant professor of animal science whose outreach activities were in several developing countries. Following B.Sc., M.Sc and Ph.D. degrees and two post-doctoral research associate positions in animal science, Dr. Stier served for five years as principal scientist in a full time technical adviser role at an international livestock center in a developing country. He continued in this role overseas during his first two years as an assistant professor. During the subsequent four years on the tenure track his position was 25% international outreach, 50% research, and 25% resident instruction.

International outreach teaching and research was central throughout the six years, as reflected in his appointment, position description, and annual work plans. Included were: working abroad; technical assistance; encouraging cooperation among research, extension, and other organizations; encouraging on farm research; collaborative research; advising students working abroad, and seeking external

funding for such research. The departmental vote was unanimous in favor of promotion.

External review letters were very positive regarding Dr. Stier's effectiveness in human resource development and capacity building for applied research and extension in developing countries. Collaborative proposals for projects in other parts of the world were also developed and funded. In addition to numerous external grants for his work, totaling a half-million dollars, he was the driving force behind many large collaborative projects. His publications included 9 articles in 5 refereed journals, 11 invited conference papers, and 11 invited presentations. Student evaluations were positive (average 4 on a 5-point scale) in his course on Livestock Production in Agricultural Development. A major outreach teaching activity was a 3-week summer institute on agricultural research to which he contributed importantly for six years. Five graduate students were part of his laboratory. The department chair concluded his transmittal letter by stating that Dr. Stier brought a new dimension to the department, that his combination of human resource development and sound service helped solve interdisciplinary problems in rural settings in developing countries, and that he fully met the expectations of the position for which he was hired.

Five review forms were completed based on Dr. Stier's promotion packet, and each reviewer from a different university assumed that Stier was from their university when assessing the packet. Four of the reviewers recommended promotion, and there were many similarities in the ratings of importance and

quality of the 20 aspects, and in their written comments. Common themes were that he met or exceeded expectations, and that international teaching and research is difficult to assess. One reviewer commented that the candidate had a very good outreach effort, and because the reviewer had traveled to developing countries, he appreciated the candidate's accomplishments, and that colleagues without this experience might view the packet differently. Contrasting perspectives occurred regarding position description, transmittal letter, and external review letters.

Most reviewers commented that their review was helped by an understanding of Dr. Stier's appointment letter, position description, and expectations for his performance, as they judged his performance, especially because his international outreach was unusual. However, one reviewer commented that such information was important mainly at the time of hiring. The reviewer who did not recommend promotion commented that such a decision should not be based on the written materials in the packet alone, but should reflect personal interaction.

Most reviewers considered the transmittal letter from the department chair as essential to indicate extent of departmental support and the context in which the candidate was working. By contrast, several reviewers indicated that they do not use such a transmittal letter to convey the departmental assessment.

The use of external review letters based on a review of the promotion packet and sample publications was widespread and most of these five reviewers rated them as important to include and those for Dr. Stier reflected his excellent

performance, especially so because so much of his performance was away from campus. By contrast, one reviewer indicated that such external review letters are not used at his institution (although packets and reviewers from other departments at that university do so). Another reviewer questioned the utility of external reviews generally because such reviewers are dependent on the written materials and lack first-hand observation and interaction with the candidate.

Another college of agriculture candidate also illustrates such contrasting perspectives that reflect institutional differences more than reviewer conclusions. Dr. Utter was an assistant professor of dairy science whose outreach (extension) activities were within the state, and whose average level of promotion recommendation was the highest in the study.

His appointment during the six years was 75% as an extension specialist, and 25% research, with no resident instruction appointment. However, he was very effective mentoring graduate students, with guest lecturers in courses, and he helped to develop and teach in a capstone course for undergraduate majors.

The departmental executive committee was unanimous in support of promotion. His extension work was highly regarded by extension staff and various practitioners related to the dairy industry. His outreach teaching was outstanding and much appreciated. He initiated, coordinated, and taught in various conferences and seminars for practitioners; in-service sessions for county extension staff, and during his probationary period made almost 50 presentations to international, national, and state extension conferences; in addition to more than



200 state and county meetings. He also produced single-print publications (50), popular press articles (60), computer software programs (10), videotapes (5), and video satellite programs (3). His applied research was supported by 20 grants totaling about a half million dollars and resulted in 7 research articles in refereed journals. Several external reviewers referred to Dr. Utter as one of the top extension specialists in his field. One reviewer rated almost every aspect as of the highest quality and in commenting on the strong recommendation for promotion referred to the clear, consistent, and strong record. The balance of teaching, research and service was rated high, "as defined by the position description." However, this reviewer wrote that a transmittal letter and external review letters were not used at that institution. (By contrast, a reviewer in another college at the same institution wrote that external review letters are very important for review, and rated the transmittal letter as very important also.)

Another reviewer decried over-emphasis on written materials when deciding on promotion, and urged personal interaction and documentation to confirm assertions in the packet.

By contrast, one of the four reviewers commented that the transmittal letter from the department chair was the single most important document in the packet. If a department chair does not write a very supportive letter, hidden problems are suspected. Information from external reviewers and the clientele can validate assertions in the packet. This reviewer characterized this candidate as almost too good to be true, without real weaknesses.

Other reviewers of other candidates who commented on external reviewer letters also expressed contrasting viewpoints. One stated that the validity of an external review depends on a sound understanding of the candidate's position. Another reviewer generally discounts external reviews because they tend to be hand-picked and likely to be positively disposed.

The foregoing examples illustrate some of the contrasting viewpoints that reviewers have, which reflect institutional and department practices and expectations, in addition to variations among individual reviewers based on their own experience and values. This variation suggests that candidates and others involved in the promotion and tenure process should treat general guidelines as tentative. This is especially so because in most institutions major guidelines and expectations are often implicit and not in writing. This applies even to variations among departments in a university. If considered tentative, guidelines can guide exploration to assess the expectations and past decisions related to a department and other people beyond the department who contribute to the review process. Consistent expectations reported by people familiar with institutional procedures can help validate actual expectations.

### Discussion

This study report culminates more than a quarter century of the author's interest in encouraging and recognizing excellent faculty performance in university outreach forms of teaching, research, and service. During this time there has been a dramatic increase in interest in evaluating faculty outreach performance. This

trend reflects growing recognition of the extent and centrality of university outreach, extension, continuing education and public service.

A major influence on institutional attention to faculty outreach roles was from Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered (1990) which was further refined by Rice and Richlin (1993). Scholarship Assessed (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff, 1997) suggests criteria for evaluation that pertain to assistant professors with outreach responsibilities. Increased attention to the scholarship of teaching and application of knowledge (in addition to discovery and integration) enhanced the rationale for outreach. Previous rationales for outreach teaching and research contributed, such as Enarson (1989) and Lynton and Elman (1987), which Lynton (1995) has continued to refine as professional service. Many subsequent publications reflect increasing centrality of outreach as a professional role, such as Diamond and Adam (1993), Curry and Wergin (1993), Wergin (1994) and JDSO (1996).

The process of assessment and rewards has been a continuing challenge over the years. What criteria should be used to judge the quality of faculty outreach performance, what procedures should be used to obtain information on which to base evaluative judgments, and how should evaluative conclusions be reflected in recognition and rewards such as promotion and tenure? Examples of publications that explore such rationales and procedures include Centra (1979, 1993) and Braskamp and Ory (1994).

Evaluation of the quality of outreach performance reflects more than the evidence presented. Such judgments regarding merit increases and promotion also

reflect institutional and collegial values, beliefs, and expectations that are seldom explicit. Promotion guidelines are insufficient when they do not fit the implicit priorities of people actually making decisions. Examples of writings that pertain to the influence of collegiate culture on evaluation of faculty outreach performance include Florestano and Hambrick (1984), Eastman (1989), and Austin (1992).

One important part of the assessment process is the decision process of reviewers. In Land Grant and other large research-oriented universities, promotion materials are reviewed at department, college, and university levels. There have been some studies that have analyzed the criteria and recommendations of reviewers of fictionalized but authentic promotion materials. (Salthouse, McKeachie, Lin, 1978; Cohen and McKeachie, 1980; Lin, McKeachie and Tucker, 1984). The relative weight that reviewers gave to faculty research, teaching and service roles was the main influence on promotion recommendations and not the type of information provided about roles that were not highly valued (Salthouse, McKeachie, Lin, 1978).

The groundwork for this study was laid in the early 1970s at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Senate committee recommendations regarding recognizing excellent faculty performance in continuing education and public service were unanimously approved. Implimentation of the recommendations occurred as part of a reorganization of the outreach function to become more decentralized and reflective of faculty concerns (Knox, 1975). Criteria for evaluating excellence of faculty outreach performance were developed and

introduced, along with efforts to encourage their actual use by reviewers (Votruba, 1978; Hanna, 1981). An update has been shared with colleagues at similar universities with much benefit (Illinois, 1993). However, in the mid-1970s, efforts to explore this issue with colleagues at other institutions met with general disinterest. By contrast, in the mid-1990s, there was great interest in various higher education associations regarding assessing and rewarding faculty performance in various roles including outreach.

During the 1990s, Land Grant universities were especially active in exploring rationales and procedures for encouraging and recognizing excellent faculty outreach performance. Especially prominent in this effort were presidents and provosts, and members of councils and committees concerned with outreach (extension, continuing education, public service), which often included administrators with outreach responsibilities. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Council on Outreach developed a rationale, which contributed to revision of campus-level guidelines for promotion and tenure to produce more positive guidance regarding outreach and extension (Wisconsin, 1997). A related ad hoc committee encouraged initiation of this study. Similar developments were occurring at universities in other states, such as: Georgia (1989), California (Pister, 1991), Kansas (1992), Illinois (1993), Michigan (1993), Minnesota (1993), Oregon (1994), and Pennsylvania (1994). Through participation in collaborative projects, national higher education association meetings, and invitational conferences, there has been much cooperation and exchange that has benefited this

study and efforts generally to strengthen assessment of faculty outreach performance.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the process of reviewing and judging promotion packets for assistant professors with varying levels of outreach responsibilities. Information from the fictionalized packets and from the review form completed by reviewers was analyzed in various ways to identify aspects of the packet that were associated with a positive recommendation. Following are the main themes that emerged across the several analyses.

The cluster analysis resulted in three clusters of variables. One cluster, which included the promotion recommendation, included two sub-groups. One sub-group, labeled creatively responsive, was composed of the promotion recommendation and quality aspects of the packet that pertained to responsiveness to university outreach/extension expectations and to originality, creativity and innovation. No other analyses identified these two aspects as related to the promotion recommendation. However, the second sub-group, labeled impact on the field, was composed of the quality aspect on impact along with external review letters and importance of the topics that candidates addressed. Both impact and external review letters (which typically address and document impact) emerged from reviewers' listings of aspects that influenced their promotion recommendation and from their rationales for their judgment. Topic importance could have contributed to both impact and external reviewers' assessments.

The second major cluster was related to career balance of research as well as teaching and service. Six of the ten quality aspects in this cluster also emerged from other analyses which indicated their influence on promotion recommendations. Outreach research and sample publications that reported such findings were included in all other analyses, so deserve special attention. In addition to the aspect on balance and the one on the vita (which contained documentation on teaching, research and service), quality aspects in this cluster included discipline oriented research, outreach service, and career improvement and enhancement. It appeared that reviewers valued promotion packets that reflected such career balance of research as well as teaching and service. At most research-oriented universities, outreach research deserves special attention by assistant professors with outreach responsibilities.

The third major cluster reflected role expectations, especially related to teaching. Three quality aspects in this cluster also emerged from all other analyses. They were: expectations as indicated in the appointment letter and position description, resident instruction and outreach teaching. The remaining two quality aspects emerged from two of the other analyses. They were the transmittal letter from the department chair (which reflected departmental expectations), and external funding (which typically reflected college expectations).

In general, the triangulation from the analyses provides some cross validation regarding the quality indicators valued by reviewers of promotion packets of assistant professors with varying levels of outreach responsibilities. In

the cluster analysis, the promotion recommendation was part of the sub-groups of quality aspects that reflected evidence of being responsive to university outreach and having an impact on the field. The collaborative and long-term nature of many outreach activities creates a special challenge to evaluation and documentation of such impact, but makes it important to include some assessment. Such impact evaluation can constitute outreach research. The two other major clusters that were separate from the promotion recommendation, were career balance that includes outreach research and role expectations that include outreach teaching. These two clusters were separate from each other, but the quality aspects in each emerged from the other analyses as influential on reviewers' recommendations. This suggests the desirability of including information related to quality of performance regarding each of these two clusters in promotion packets, in addition to evidence of impact and responsiveness.

Level of promotion recommendation (deny, marginal, recommend, strong) was little related to the extent of outreach as part of the total appointment. However, the aspects that were valued by reviewers were more likely to occur for assistant professors whose appointment included research and resident instruction. However, some of the candidates' packets that were most highly rated by reviewers reflected much of the effort devoted to outreach forms of teaching and research. It is likely that most of the packets would have been recommended for promotion to associate professor with tenure, even if outreach and extension was ignored. However, in many but not all instances reviewers accepted outreach



forms of teaching, research and service as legitimate, instead of traditional reliance on resident instruction, discipline-oriented research, and institutional service. The quality of performance and documentation that included teaching, research and service seemed to be more important than relative emphasis on outreach.

Fortunately, the criteria that emerged from this study were very congruent with the six general standards proposed by Glassick, Huber and Maeroff (1997, p.36) for evaluation of the professoriate. Their six standards pertained to clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. The Creatively Responsive cluster from the current study reflected clear goals (importance of topics, innovative, responsive to expectations which should be apparent from the transmittal letter from the department chair); adequate preparation (evidence from vita and other sources regarding career improvement); and appropriate methods (methodological rigor in outreach and disciplinary research). The Impact on Field cluster reflected significant results (impact, outreach teaching, honors). The Balance of Research as well as teaching and service cluster reflected effective presentation (publications, external review letters). The Expectations cluster reflected reflective critique (career improvement as indicated in the vita).

Beyond these general conclusions, it is important to recognize the contrasting viewpoints among some reviewers regarding the applicability of aspects such as appointment/position description, transmittal letter from department, and external review letters. This suggests the desirability of using

promotion guidelines as tentative until they are compared with actual expectations and past decisions in the specific situation.

In conclusion, the study findings suggest the following implications for strengthening the process of assessing and recognizing excellent university faculty outreach performance.

1. Throughout the probationary period, assistant professors and those who mentor and assist them should emphasize, evaluate, and document those activities and accomplishments that they and reviewers are likely to value at the time of a decision on promotion and tenure.
2. These guidelines can be useful to people in various roles related to a promotion decision, including: candidates, mentors, department chairs, reviewers and outreach administrators.
3. Include at the successive stages of the evolving promotion packet, information about aspects of high quality performance likely to be especially relevant to the promotion decision, such as the following:
  - A. Creatively responsive to university outreach (responsive, creative).
  - B. Impact on the field (impact, external review).
  - C. Balance of research with teaching and service (balance, outreach research and service, sample publications,

disciplinary research). It may be desirable to explain the collaborative nature of some outreach research.

- D. Expectations, especially teaching (letter of appointment, transmittal from department, outreach teaching).
4. Make the promotion packet as brief, complete and clear as possible to avoid unnecessary material and emphasize information most pertinent to the promotion decision regarding quality and productivity.
  5. There has been gradual acceptance of outreach forms of teaching, research, and service as legitimate with both similarities and differences compared with disciplinary research, resident instruction and institutional service.
  6. The proportion of outreach within an assistant professor's total contribution is less important for promotion than convincing evidence of balanced attention to high quality performance and accomplishments.
  7. Societal and institutional trends and differing experiences and expectations can result in contrasting reviewer viewpoints so treat any general guidelines as tentative and assess actual current expectations and past decisions.
  8. When deciding on information to emphasize in a promotion packet, consider likely institutional expectations about the importance of

various aspects of the packet, as well as evidence of the quality and impact of performance.

9. Universities can revise promotion guidelines, but the values and expectations of reviewers may not match the guidelines.
10. Recognize and use the increasing amount of material relevant to the promotion and tenure process to provide background to guide career advancement for assistant professors with outreach responsibilities.

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Review Form 1/97

## ASSESSMENT OF PROMOTION PACKET

\_\_\_\_\_  
Packet Number\_\_\_\_\_  
Fictional Name\_\_\_\_\_  
Field

Thank you for helping us understand criteria and procedures related to the promotion and tenure decision for assistant professors with outreach responsibilities. Please complete a separate review form for each fictionalized promotion packet, as you might if you were part of an actual promotion review process at departmental, college or university levels.

Part A of the review form is on specific aspects of the promotion packet, Part B is on your overall impressions, and Part C is on your recommendations.

Part A

For each aspect listed in Part A, please complete two ratings: (a) Importance (how important is such information generally for a promotion decision?) and (b) Quality (how high is the quality, as reflected in the information provided in this packet?) Complete each rating by circling the number that best represents your judgment. (If there is inadequate information to make a judgment, circle NA.) Provide explanatory comments.

ASPECT		Lo					Hi
1. Transmittal letter from department chair. Comments:	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2. Expectations/appointment letter/position description. Comments:	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5	NA
3. Vita/background information on education, career. Comments:	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5	NA
4. Resident teaching/peer review/student ratings. Comments:	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. Outreach teaching participant ratings. Comments:	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5	NA

ASPECT		Lo				Hi
6. Discipline oriented research, pattern of publications.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
7. Outreach research, evidence of contribution.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
8. Institutional service, committees.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
9. Outreach service.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
10. External funding.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
11. Sample publications.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA
12. External review letters.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA

### Part B

The following ratings in Part B seek your overall impressions based on information from various aspects of the promotion packet.

ASPECTS		Lo				Hi
13. Responsive to university outreach/extension expectations.	(a) Importance	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Comments:	(b) Quality	1	2	3	4	5 NA

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 14. Balance of teaching, research, service.<br>Comments:           | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 15. Importance of topics that<br>candidate addressed.<br>Comments: | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 16. Originality, creativity, innovation.<br>Comments:              | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 17. Methodological rigor.<br>Comments:                             | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 18. Impact and contribution to field.<br>Comments:                 | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 19. Honors and recognition.<br>Comments:                           | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |
| 20. Career improvement and enhancement.<br>Comments:               | (a) Importance 1 2 3 4 5 NA<br>(b) Quality 1 2 3 4 5 NA |

### Part C

Your recommendation and comments.

21. What decision would you recommend regarding promotion to associate professor with tenure for the nominee, and why?  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_ promote \_\_\_\_\_ deny  
 (b) why?
22. Which aspects of this candidate's packet most influenced your recommendation, and why?  
 (a) (aspect numbers) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) why?

23. What missing information (if any) should have been included, to contribute to a sound judgment?

24. In general, which aspects of a promotion packet are most important to you in judging the performance of a faculty member with outreach responsibilities, and why?

(a) (aspect numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) why?

25. Other comments:

Reviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_ Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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